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U.S. Department of Commerce

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Estuarine Research Reserve System

AGENCY: Stewardship Division, Office for Coastal Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

ACTION: Notice of Approval of the Apalachicola, Florida National Estuarine Research Reserve Management Plan revision.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Stewardship Division, Office for Coastal Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce approves the Apalachicola, Florida National Estuarine Research Reserve Management Plan revision. The revised management plan outlines the administrative structure; the research & monitoring, education, training, and stewardship goals of the reserve; and the plans for future land acquisition and facility development to support reserve operations. The Apalachicola Reserve revised plan will replace the plan approved in 2003.

The Apalachicola Reserve management plan emphasizes a fully integrated approach that links ongoing research, education, training and stewardship programs together. This integrated approach, in coordination with strategic partnerships addresses high priority reserve issues

including public use and access, changing land use patterns, the loss of cultural resources, impacts of global and regional processes on ecosystems and communities, engagement with local communities, and changes in reserve habitats. Since the last management plan, the reserve has expanded its monitoring and geographic information system programs; increased staff resources; completed a site profile, established a Coastal Training Program; expanded educational programs; and constructed a new nature center and headquarters complex in the town of Eastpoint that includes laboratories, offices, classrooms, interpretative areas, and are planning interpretive trails.

There is a boundary change associated with this management plan revision that will decrease their total acreage from 246,766 acres to 234,715. The change is attributable to accuracy adjustments based on improved geographic information for the site. The revised management plan will serve as the guiding document for the 234,715 acre Apalachicola Reserve for the next five years. View the Apalachicola, Florida Reserve Management Plan revision at (<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/sites/apalachicola/publications.htm>).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Matt Chasse at (301) 563-1198 or Erica Seiden at (301) 563-1172 of NOAA's National Ocean Service, Stewardship Division, Office for Coastal Management, 1305 East-West Highway, N/ORM5, 10th floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Dated: October 20, 2015.

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